

REUTERS
5 APRIL 1983

By Jeffrey Antevil
WASHINGTON
Nuclear - Burt

The Reagan administration is concerned that Moscow may have violated the unratified SALT-2 treaty but has not yet decided whether to level public charges, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Burt said today.

Burt, the top State Department specialist on Europe, told the Overseas Writers group the administration was carefully studying allegations that recent Soviet missile tests violated the 1979 strategic arms limitation treaty.

"We do have concerns," he said, but he added that no decision had been taken to make any such accusation publicly.

He also said a draft letter made public by U.S. Roman Catholic bishops today calling on the West to renounce first use of nuclear weapons was "a wrongheaded strategy."

He said "a no-first-use military doctrine makes war more likely" since it would weaken U.S. ability to deter a large-scale, non-nuclear attack on Western Europe by threatening to respond with atomic weapons if necessary.

Other officials told Reuters today that a debate was under way within the administration over whether to accuse Moscow publicly of violating SALT-2 and other recent arms accords.

The officials, who asked not to be named, said the debate involved not just differing views on Soviet behavior and intentions but "complicated and fuzzy" technical questions on whether a violation had actually occurred.

Much of the U.S. intelligence community argues that Moscow tested two new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) last fall and last month, violating a SALT-2 provision permitting each side just one "new type" missile.

But the officials told Reuters this was not clear-cut, and some members of an interagency task force on the issue believe the treaty may permit testing more than one new ICBM provided only one reaches a full-scale program of more than 12 tests.

They said this provision of the treaty was designed to allow a country to try a new missile and then go back to the drawing boards to develop another one if the first failed to perform satisfactorily.

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